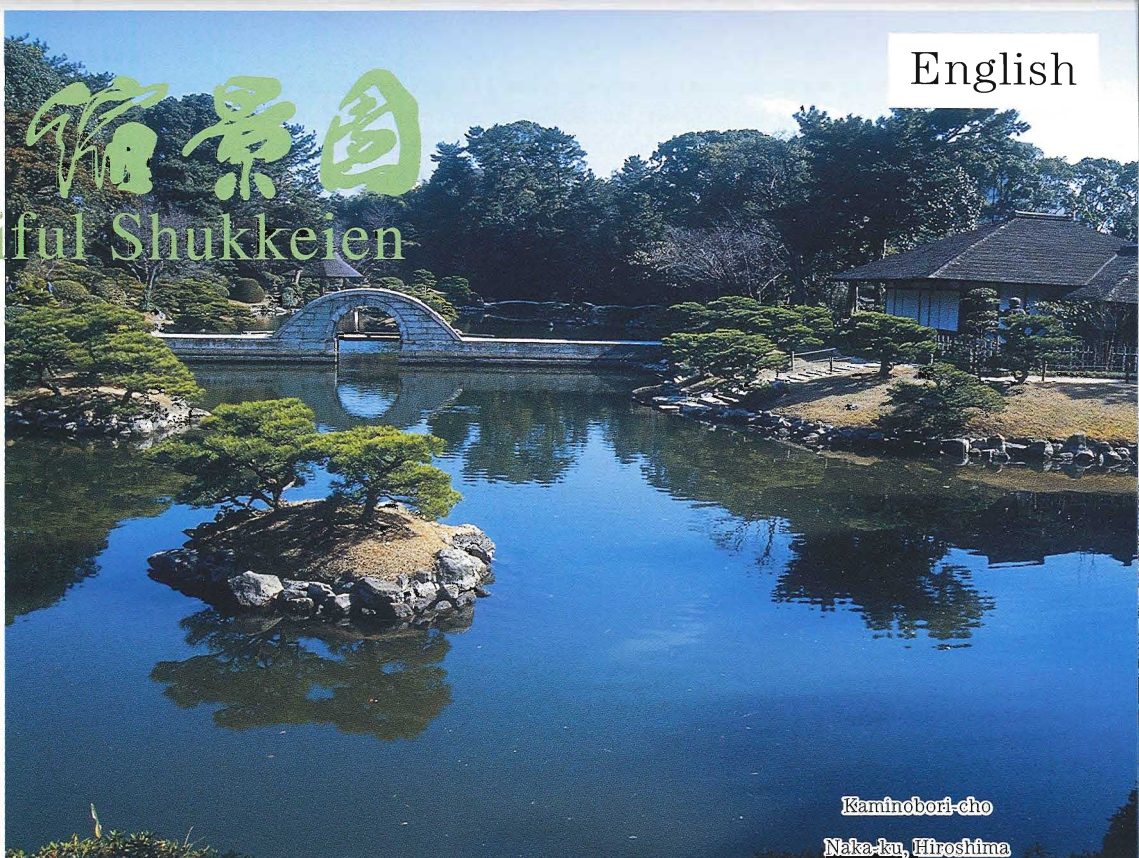


名勝宿景園 Beautiful Shukkeien



Kaminobori-cho

Naka-ku, Hiroshima

TEL:(082)221-3620

MAP OF SHUKKEIEN



ADMISSION FEE : Adults : ¥250 High school & college students : ¥150 Children : ¥100

HOURS : April 1-Sept. 30 : 9 am-6 pm
Oct. 1-Mar. 31 : 9 am-5 pm

About the garden

Construction of Shukkeien was begun in 1620, the year following Asano Nagaakira's installation as Daimyō (feudal lord) of Hiroshima. It was built by his principal retainer, Ueda Sōko, a famous master of the tea ceremony, as the garden of Nagaakira's villa. Its name (literally "shrink-scenery garden") expresses the idea of collecting and miniaturizing many scenic views, and according to tradition it is a miniaturized landscape modeled on Xihu (West Lake) in Hangzhou, China.

In the center of Sukkeien is Takuei Pond, containing more than 10 islets large and small. Around its circumference mountains, valleys, bridges, tea cottages and arbors are skilfully arranged, all connected by a path by which one can stroll around the entire garden.

Gardens of this type are known as circular-tour gardens. They first appeared in the Muromachi Era (1336-1568) ; in the early Edo Era (1600-1867) they culminated in their classical form, to which pattern conform the main gardens of most daimyō. In order to make the land allotted to Shukkeien seem many times larger than its actual size, every part is rich in variety : here a remote mountain and solitary valley, here a broad seashore ; blended with the moods of the seasons are a concentrated spectacle and a diversity that truly make the garden worthy of its name.

The bridge which spans the center of the pond, Kokō-kyō (lit. "straddling rainbow bridge"), was first built differently, then demolished and redone in its present form at the order of Shigeakira, seventh lord of the clan, by a famous Kyoto builder. It evinces a free command of bold and novel technique reminiscent of both Engetsuhashi in the Korakuen of Koishikawa in Tokyo and Chitosehashi at Kyoto's Shūgakuin Detached Palace.

The Seifūkan is near the center of the garden. It is built in the sukiyazukuri tea-cottage style, as befits Shukkeien; the roof is shingled. The west side is done in the elegant shoinzukuri writing-chamber style, and in the east wall is set a lyre-shaped katōmado window which frames a perfect view of Kokō-kyō. This cottage was especially beloved by many generations of daimyō of the Aasano clan.

In 1945 the garden was destroyed by the atomic bomb, but the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education instituted repairs to restore its scenery to its condition prior to the bombing ; the Seifūkan, Meigetsutei and other structures were also restored. Now about 180,000 visitors come to Shukkeien each year ; it has become a very popular sightseeing spot.

Chronology

1619 (Genna 5) Asano Nagaakira takes up residence at Hiroshima Castle. His fief comprises all of Aki Province and eight counties of Bingo Province, the total area being assessed at a rice-yield of 426,000 koku (1 koku=4.96 bushels).

1620 (Genna 6) Nagaakira's principal retainer, Ueda Sōko, begins construction of the garden.

1783-88 (Temmei 3-8) At daimyō Asano Shigeakira's invitation Kyoto landscape gardener Shimizu Shichirōemon comes and makes improvements.

1940 (Shōwa 15) Shukkeien is donated to Hiroshima Prefecture. It is designated a National Scenic Spot.

1945 (Shōwa 20) The buildings and vegetation are destroyed by fire in the atomic bombing.

1951 (Shōwa 26) The garden is opened to the public while restoration is still in progress.

1964 (Shōwa 39) The Seifūkan is restored.

1974 (Shōwa 49) The Meigetsutei is restored.



Seifūkan



Yūyū-tei